

Higher Education Learning Modules: Notice Five Things

Dawn Williams: All right, we are back for Resiliency and Wellness. Hi, Gail.

Gail Joseph: Hello, Dawn. How are you?

Dawn: I'm great. I'm going to be better after Resiliency and Wellness. I am every time!

Gail: I hope that you are! So, one of the things that we know from being teachers is that it can be stressful. And I remember when I was a Head Start teacher, I was also going to school, trying to get my degree, trying to teach at the same time, and it just was--I had a lot of stress, and so I like to think of this section as kind of what I wish I would've known then in terms of some strategies. And so, I wanted to just give one strategy that I've been using a lot lately and I think could be really helpful when we just want to take a break for ourselves.

So, this is the section where we think about how do we just kind of give ourselves some break, give ourselves some self-care so that we can do a better job at teaching young children, working with young children, getting through our days happy and healthy?

So, this little strategy is what we call "notice five things," and so it's a pretty common mindfulness exercise. And the idea here is really just to center yourself, to connect with the environment, and to just think about just what I'm going to tell you to think about. So, this is the time to not think about what you're worried about from what just happened that morning or worried about what's going to happen tomorrow when they come do an observation in your classroom. Instead to just be in the moment here, and so we call it "notice five things."

So, you just pause for a moment, and you look around, and you just notice five things you can see. So, you might just say I see the camera, I see the lights, I see the table; I see this snow globe from one of our other "Teacher Time" episodes, I see the clicker. So, it's just noticing five things you can see, and then it's noticing five things you can hear. And you really have to pause to do that, right? I can hear the traffic; I can hear my breathing; I can hear the click of a keyboard. So just thinking about what I can hear.

And then the last thing is kind of five things that connect with my body. So, kind of five body points, if you will. So, I can notice my feet on the floor, my back against the chair, my watch on my wrist, my shirt on my skin, the air on my face. So, it's really just thinking about five things I can see, five things I can hear, and then five kind of body point connections. And doing that in just a moment and doing it at several times during the day, right? Just kind of, "Wow, let me just notice five things."

So, this is not like I'm taking a break and I'm going to be in the staff room. This is like I'm going to be right here in the moment, and I'm going to just notice five things. And then what's great about this strategy is that you could teach this to young children as well. So, imagine at circle time just making a daily practice perhaps of noticing five things, maybe just kind of noticing five body points, if you will. So, I'm noticing -- asking kids to just notice five things on their body, like how my head is feeling or how my shoulders are feeling, how my -- back of my legs are feeling on the floor, how my feet are feeling.

So, it's just this idea again of being in the moment, of centering yourself, giving yourself that break, not thinking about what you're worried about, not thinking about what happened before, but just being in the moment. And that's the tip for today.

Dawn: I am calmer. I am calmer! I got to do all that. I hope you did, because it worked on me.